

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Carol A. Murray, Commissioner

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NHDOT ISSUES REPORT ON ONE-WAY TOLL EXPERIMENT IN HAMPTON

August 22-November 1, 2003 Trial at I-95 Plaza Successful in Reducing Backups

A ten-week trial period of one-way tolling at the Hampton Toll Plaza on Interstate 95 significantly reduced congestion at the plaza during heavy traffic periods without jeopardizing motorist safety. That's according to a 16-page "One-Way Toll Report" presented today to Governor Craig Benson and the Executive Council by New Hampshire Department of Transportation Commissioner Carol Murray.

On August 14, 2003, Governor Craig Benson directed the Department of Transportation to reduce the traffic backups at the Hampton Toll Plaza by developing a test plan for one-way toll collection. The report details the purpose and scope of the one-way toll experiment, its implementation and operation between August 22 and November 1, 2003, and its effect on traffic and revenue. Among the report's findings:

- The test succeeded in meeting its purpose of significantly reducing traffic backups and congestion on I-95 during a busy time period.
- Backups in the southbound, non-tolled direction were virtually eliminated.
- The addition of an 11th lane in the northbound tolled direction helped to reduce backups.
- Traffic responded positively to the new toll situation and no accidents occurred.
- The one safety issue of concern during the test period was motorist speed through the southbound toll plaza.
- Southbound traffic increased 6.1% southbound during the test compared to 2002.
- Northbound traffic declined by 3.7% compared to 2002 traffic counts.
- The rate of traffic diversion declined as the testing period continued.
- Traffic on US Route 1 increased 10% over 2002 traffic levels during the trial.
- After the test, traffic on US 1 returned to roughly pre-test levels.
- The gross revenue loss during the ten-week period was approximately \$180,000.
- Personnel costs were reduced by \$47,000 during the test.

In a letter accompanying the One-Way Toll Report, Commissioner Murray recommended returning to one-way toll operations this spring through the fall of 2004 so more data can be gathered for a full evaluation of the one-way toll experiment.

"Given the positives associated with one-way toll collection's elimination of backups at the Hampton Toll Plaza in the areas of customer satisfaction, air quality and convenience, seasonal implementation is recommended," Commissioner Murray wrote.